



أسلوب القرآن والسنة
في تنمية الشخصية

Therapy from The Quran and Ahadith

A reference guide for character
development.



In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful.

All Praise is for Allah, Lord of the Worlds. Abundant Peace and Blessings be upon All the Prophets; from the First to the Last of them; the Prophet Muhammad (saw) Who was sent for mankind as the finest model of living the Qur'an and the Companions (rah) and Imams thereafter, (rh) as some of the greatest intellects and examples of Iman. May al Hakim (The Wise), al Adl (The Just) grant us the wisdom to use this knowledge for the benefit of the ummah, for success in the Worldly Life and the Hereafter and grant us a rising with these, the most Excellent of Companions. Truly All success is from Allah (swt)



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Dedication

To my most honourable and respected parents who introduced me as a child to the best role-models: the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and His Wives and Companions (ra) in the most inspiring way and who took me safely, heart and soul through the years of working towards this project.

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To my brothers and sisters who were always there to clarify dilemmas be they practical, intellectual or spiritual and who always encouraged and supported me in so many ways throughout the years to keep up the search.

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Foreword

A few decades ago the late Dr Muhammad Uthman Najati, may Allah Bless his soul, wrote two books, *The Holy Qur'an and Psychology* and *The Prophet's Hadith and Psychology*. In these books, the author simply categorised Verses from the Holy Qur'an and Blessed *Hadith* that were related to the different topics of general psychology. I was honoured to have Dr. Najati as my colleague in the University of Imam Mohammad bin Saud in the eighties. He told me that before retiring at night he used to read a few pages from the Noble Qur'an or the Blessed *Hadith* of our Prophet (saw), whenever a verse or *hadith* seemed to him to be expressing some aspect of modern psychology such as motivation, personality or perception, he would categorise it as such. Dr. Najati was a pioneer of Islamic psychology and his two books were the first endeavour of its kind. They were and still are of great benefit to Arab university students of psychology as well as to the general public.

The present volume by Dr. Feryad Hussain is a similar but much more specialised and refined reference book. In my experience, I find that European psychologists who revert to Islam and non-European Muslim psychologists who were born and raised in Europe or the US do not show the apologetic attitude that we generally find among Arab and Asian psychologists when critiquing secular Western psychology. Once the former group commit themselves to Islam, their "psychological worldview" is diametrically changed. They know their Western culture and are quite aware of its deep-down secular and anti-religious aspects. They do not harbour any conscious or unconscious feelings of inferiority towards the claims of Western social sciences and are not afraid to appear as 'unscientific,' as many local psychologists do, since they are better able to differentiate between what is really scientific and what poses as scientific but

"...And speak to them an effective word (i.e. to believe in Allah, worship Him, obey Him, and be afraid of Him) to reach their inner selves." (Sr An Nisa, 63)

Introduction

The relationship between Islam and Psychology is well established. The Qur'an is often described as a book of human nature, teaching the creation their aims of life with continuous reminders to reflect on its words and learn from its meaning. The Qur'an deals with the human psych and exemplifies the challenges to behavioural change and character development through its narratives, analogies and direct guidance.

The therapeutic process is in essence based on these very principles and although the Qur'an does not describe itself as a book of Psychology, it is therefore, a great resource to those who work with people with psychological problems. As Allah (swt) Himself tells us "*It is a guidance for those who are God-conscious*" (Sr Baqarah, 2).

That our purpose is to Worship the Creator (swt) is told to us clearly (Sr ad Dhariat, 56) but it is 'The Book' (i.e., The Qur'an) that gives us the directives towards attainment; the actualisation of the *fitra*, (i.e., man's natural disposition). Qur'annic teachings, then, accord the creation the freedom to live the *Haq* (Divine Truth) through this development of character, since the accounting will be for that individual alone, no excuses or justifications based on cultural or social acceptability. This empowers the creation to be free to choose; to enable ultimate self-liberation.

Allah (swt) sent many beautiful models of character in all the Prophets (as) and tells us "*Indeed in the Messenger of Allah (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow*" (Sr al Ahzab, 21).

The Unique Qur'annic Generation; the Companions (*Sahabas -ra*) set us fine examples as everyday (though extraordinary) citizens of the Islamic world. They implemented this guidance and utilised it successfully to meet the psychological as well as social challenges of their lives; as is evidenced throughout the Qur'an and *Sunnah/ahadith* (i.e. speech/actions of the Prophet, saw) literature and in the legacy of their worldly achievements to-date. Indeed, those achievements now form the cornerstones of societies the world over.

Muslims working in the discipline of contemporary Clinical Psychology in the Muslim and non-Muslim world alike have reverted with a passion *bi idh nillah* to the use of Qur'an and *sunnah/ahadith* to address the challenges facing humanity today. The growing development of models which make up 'Islamic psychology' is a testament to this fact. This does not, however, mean there has been no controversy or difficulty regarding the acceptability of the underlying concepts of these new developments from an Islamic Legal (*Shari*) point of view. Debates notwithstanding, the approaches are continuing to be modified and implemented in their various guises.

What is the book for?

For Muslim, clinical psychologists, the main dilemma has been one of implementation, i.e., how to apply the concepts in a therapeutic setting, since there is no clear methodology in spite of the growing abundance of theory. The majority of Muslim psychologists in non-Muslim countries are understandably, not necessarily well versed (or not versed at all) in Arabic or the Qur'annic sciences and have, therefore, been restricted in their use of this information. Where attempts at integration have been made, there is also reasonable doubt as to the level of qualification of psychologists to apply the information within the correct Islamic frame of reference, that is, according to accepted *tafsir and ahadith* methodology. This problem coupled with the lack of connection to Islamic scholars in the world of therapy has necessitated the need for a move towards a more inclusive approach, where both psychologists and scholars

of *tafsir* (i.e. interpretation of Qur'an and explanations of *ahadith*) and *ahadith* work together. However, the need has been met with a random rather than systematic pairing and the calls for use of Qur'an and *ahadith* in therapy continue.

In an attempt to meet the challenge of implementation, one simple, practical approach is a basic reference text citing psychologically relevant *ayaat* (division of verses in Qur'an) and/or *ahadith*, identified and interpreted according to accepted *tafsir*/ *Hadith* methodology. The urgency of need and the lack of availability of such texts in the English language have resulted in this attempt - ill qualified though I am for the task. As a clinician and not an Islamic scholar, the aim must be modest, i.e., to make easy the process of finding references/ support from Qur'an and *ahadith* - for incorporation in to therapeutic interventions for clinicians.

This text is simply that; Identification of those Qur'annic *ayaat*/ *ahadith* which may be used for therapeutic purposes, as analogy, in order to facilitate understanding of mental health problems and impact upon treatment effectiveness.

The reader should be clear that the text is in no way a psychological interpretation of Qur'an and ahadith. In order to keep within an accepted framework from a methodological perspective, only pre-existing and accepted interpretations of all religious texts have been used.

Who is the book for?

The aim of this text is that it be used as a therapy aide for psychologists/therapists/counsellors working in the field of mental health, or indeed anyone who is trying to maintain good mental health/character development.

Islam was sent to all creation and Allah (swt) repeatedly calls to 'Mankind' throughout the Qur'an, not just the Muslims. Hence, it's applicability is universal. Though the details of the faith may not be something non-Muslims or indeed some Muslims are familiar with,

the concepts therein remain effective, as with any alternative ideas given to clarify or exemplify explanation of a situation. The symbols of good and evil whether one is a Muslim or not will still apply and do not replace the reality of Allah (swt) and *Shaitan* (Satan). Where there are descriptions of Reward and Punishment, Paradise and Hell-fire in the Worldly Life and the Hereafter and the patient cannot relate to, this does not negate the satisfaction one feels at doing the 'right thing' if only by the creation (on a secular basis or otherwise). Additionally the beauty of analogy means that any scenario can be offered to increase understanding or motivation to change, since the principles may still be applied. Hence the work may be useful for all individuals regardless of their religious beliefs and indeed simply for the benefit of ones overall psychological well-being.

The Analogical Model

The model of Islamic psychology upon which this text is based is simply one of analogy. *Note: In this model 'Analogy' refers specifically to parallel cases, agreement and similarity of ideas and so excludes any form of symbolic interpretation as may be commonly employed in alternative therapeutic techniques. The similarity of meaning comes from the apparent/overt meaning of Qur'an as well as accepted interpretations only. Where interpretations refer to hypocrites or non believers – the link/description refers to the characteristic not the person based on interpretations made in Ibn Kathir.* The text also makes use of any direct guidance for mankind on behaviour, such as guidance on food or activities of daily living – all of which contribute to a healthy lifestyle and, for the comfort of non-Muslims, have been in fact been supported by the latest scientific research.

Just as therapists use analogy to facilitate understanding of their situation, the *ayaat/ahadith* and their surrounding circumstances are used, since the words of the Creator (swt) will most aptly summarise the experience of the creation. Clearly in order to learn from analogy, one is not expected to participate or live the ideas being

Interpretation of the Qur'an

For the sake of ease, the basic English translation of *ayaat* has been taken from the renown '*Interpretation of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an*,' translated by al-Hilali and Khan. All interpretations of *ayaat* are taken solely from *Tafsir Ibn Kathir* (Abridged English translation, 2003). This may limit the interpretation and readers well versed in *tafsir* may question ibn Kathir's interpretations. However, since *this text is not a psychological tafsir*, the use of this established interpretation was considered adequate.

Note: There are instances where 'No Comment' has been given by ibn Kathir without explanation as to why. In these cases, in order to honour his interpretation, no further elaboration has been made by the author.

Sharia gives rulings relating to knowledge-dissemination regarding applicability/acceptability, hence, secular models of knowledge-dissemination can not be applied. Whilst Psychology as a discipline encourages developing symbolism in understanding problems, the dangers of symbolic and random interpretation of Qur'annic *ayaat* on ones *iman* and on the credibility of the work in the discipline of Qur'annic sciences is well understood. There is a distinct difference between permissible creative applicability of *ayaat* and symbolic applicability, where the literal meaning is reduced or removed for the sake of convenience. From a *Shari* point of view, only the former is acceptable.

It is important to note that any therapeutic parallels drawn are not attempts or claims at making new and far-fetched interpretations, nor do they intend to ignore existing classical interpretations. The interpretation of *ayaat* is brief since the detailed interpretation is considered beyond the remit of this work. *The aim is not to re-write classic interpretations but to apply the underlying principle for use in therapy.*

Note: The reference to the difficulties between religious groups at the time of revelation is simply coincidence and is representative of the events at the time. The intention is not to vilify adherents of any religion, but to report the historical facts as recorded in established and recognised interpretations. Such is the case with all religious texts.

Interpretation of Ahadith

All *ahadith* were taken only from the seminal texts of *ahadith* by Sahih Bukhari and Sahih Muslim (English translations).

Ahadith literature is known to support, amplify and clarify any ambiguity (in terms of permissible meaning and subsequent action) of Qur'annic *ayaat*. The *Sunnah* (that is, the words - *ahadith*, behaviour and those actions of others to which tacit approval was given by the Prophet Muhammad - saw) is a complete and living example of the manifestation of the teachings of Qur'an and Islam as an example for mankind to emulate. It is important to note that the significance of the *Sunnah* is not simply to follow a chosen Prophet at the expense of deriding others, since this is something not permissible in Islam as all Prophets (as) bought the message of monotheism. However, as the Last Prophet, His (saw) message and guidance is final and this consolidates or reviews all previous revelation and Messengers (as).

The following of the *Sunnah* is to benefit mankind in a practical way, so making Islam accessible and its aims achievable to people in general. Otherwise, as with many religions, it may be misunderstood to be simply a set of beliefs which seemingly do not relate to Worldly Life: '*a theoretical life option*'. The *Sunnah* highlights and facilitates the connection between this life and the Hereafter; since how one lives determines their end, as is repeatedly told in the Qur'an. Hence Islam is described as a 'way of life.' The *Sunnah* is an actualisation of this. Obviously its inclusion here is because it is a perfect example (as is apparent in the *ahadith* presented) of balanced living – the healthiest approach for Mankind. Psychologically this is always the aim, a balanced and considered approach to living. It should be acknowledged that although there are other examples throughout

for Quran and *ahadith* literature, and is not related to empirical methods as applicable to non-revelation based knowledge, since these methodologies do not apply. The difference in methodology does not reduce the scientific rigour and acceptability. Again, the aim of the text is simply to add an additional perspective to understanding the patients experience and alleviating distress. It is hoped that the effectiveness of its use is researched in due course.

No doubt, the Creator (swt) best knows His creation. May He, *al Karim* (The Generous), *al Wadud* (The Lovingkind), *al Rauf* (The All-Pitying), accept this work and write it as a good deed inshaAllah. Any mistakes are my responsibility and for this the reader is requested to ask for forgiveness. For any suggestions for improvements, readers are requested to contact the publisher to make the relevant alterations, so insha'Allah, supplicating that it be written as *sadaqah jariah* and allow this to be a shared, on-going work in progress. The reader is requested to make *dua* for themselves after each *ayah* to protect them or aid them from the words and promises therein.

Since what will remain of us is only that which we do for Allah (swt), may He, *al Mani* (The Protector), always keep pure the intentions of those of us who use any of the ideas presented and may the knowledge herein be a means of connecting our daily lives with our Lord (swt) to Whom is the final return.

Dr Feryad Hussain (DClinPsyc)

Islamabad, Pakistan. OCTOBER 2010.

Terminology

Psychological

The word 'patient' has been used to denote clinically-specific issues and the word 'individual' is used where issues are generally applicable to human suffering, though overlap will necessarily occur since patients in therapy are not depersonalised and remain 'individuals.'

Tafsir/Ahadith

The Believers (al Mu'minun): This refers to those people who accepted all the Messengers (saw) and revelations sent by Allah (swt). In the time of the Prophet Muhammad (saw) this refers to those people who accepted Islam.

The Disbelievers (al Kuffar): The people who rejected the Messengers and the Last Prophet Muhammad (saw).

Al-Haq: The Real, Absolute Truth (Bewley, 1998, p209), according to Allah (swt) not the creation. This is manifest in the Laws commanded in Qur'an. Also interpreted to mean Islamic Monotheism or Qur'an (Bukhari, 1994, p788).

Hypocrites (al Munafiqun): During the revelation of Islam, a number of people claimed to convert to Islam to take from its benefits but denied it when the Muslims faced challenges and difficulties. They were responsible for creating many problems since there was no sincerity in their allegiance and their aim was to cause divisions

In the name of Allah, The Most Beneficent, The Most Merciful

"Guide us to the Straight Way. The way of those on whom You have bestowed Your Grace, not (the way) of those who earned Your Anger, nor of those who went astray." (Sr al Fatiha, 6-7)

Accepting advice

Accepting advice is an active process. It involves psychological presence, active listening and a commitment to the ideas discussed. This inherently involves an ability to reflect and reconsider ones position where necessary.

Ayah

"Mankind was one community and Allah sent Prophets with glad tidings and warnings, and with them He sent down the Scripture in truth to judge between people in matters wherein they differed. And only those to whom (the Scripture) was given differed concerning it after clear proofs had come to them through hatred, one to another. Then Allah by His Leave guided those who believed to the truth of that wherein they differed. And Allah guides whom He wills to a Straight Path." (Sr al Baqarah, 213)

Interpretation: Deviation from the Truth, causing disputes after Clear signs have been presented proving the Haq.

In the therapy setting, advice (in the form of therapeutic implementation) is the foundation. However, it is common for patients to attend sessions with no intention to change at that time. Their attendance may simply be to appease other peoples concern about their problem. Of course what is lacking here is commitment to change and attendance for therapy is naturally counter-productive. The ayah exemplifies this process.

Ayah

"And among them are some who listen to you (O Muhammad) till when they go out from you, they say to those who have received knowledge: 'What has he said just now?' Such are men whose hearts Allah has sealed, and they follow their lusts (evil desires)." (Sr Muhammad, 16)

Interpretation: A description of the hypocrites at the time of revelation in Medina who were misguided and limited in their understanding of what was for their benefit: to maintain Monotheism.

Hadith

It was related that Abu Huraira said that The Messenger of God (saw) said: 'My similitude and the similitude of the people is as a person who lit a fire and let the butterflies and insects fall into it.' He continued to ward them from it but they overwhelmed him and plunged into it. He said: 'This is my similitude and yours. I ward you from the fire, but you overwhelm me and dive into it.' (Muslim, C53, H1548)

Theme: The book of merits

Patients will often attend sessions, sit, listen, agree and then return to the next session without having followed any of the agreed suggestions, yet complaining of the same difficulties. Although obvious, it is important to emphasise the need to be present both physically and psychologically in therapy. Also to highlight that choosing not to follow advice is an obvious explanation for no change/progress. It is surprising how many patients do not make this connection, assuming that the cure is simply in the conversation alone without action. The ayaat/Hadith both point to this process.

Ayaat

Have you (O Muhammad) seen him who has taken as his ilah (god) his own vain desire? Would you then be a Wakil (a disposer of his affairs or a watcher) over him? Or do you think that most of

is wrong with those people who look towards the sky during the Salat (prayer).’ His talk grew stern while delivering this speech and he said, ‘ They should stop (looking towards the sky during salat (prayer)); otherwise their eyes would be snatched away.’ (Bukhari, O.B. C6, H 432)

Theme: Looking towards the sky during the Salat (prayer)

Narrated Aisha (ra): I asked Allah’s Messenger (saw) about looking hither and thither in As- Salat (prayer). He replied, ‘It is a way of stealing by which Satan takes away (a portion) from the Salat (prayer) of a person.’ (Bukhari ,O.B. C7, H433)

Theme: To look hither and thither in Salat (prayer).

These *ahadith* make the fundamental point that central to accepting advice is openness/readiness to listen, psychological presence and good timing. The final *hadith* clearly states the consequence of not doing so.

Actions not words

The end of any therapeutic conversation is in the subsequent action, that is, the behavioural change and achievement of therapy goals.

Ayah

They swear by Allah their strongest oaths that if only you would order them, they would leave (their homes for fighting in Allah’s Cause). Say: ‘Swear you not; (this) obedience (of yours) is known (to be false). Verily, Allah is Well-Acquainted with what you do.’ (Sr an Nur, 53)

Interpretation: The hypocrites who promised to go into battle with the Prophet Muhammad (saw), though their level of obedience was known to be false/a lie.

Cognitive change alone without the related behavioural change

will not be long lasting or effective in managing the patient’s problem. The *ayah* is a good reminder to the patient that the point of attending therapy is not purely in the agreements made with the therapists but in the resulting change of behaviour.

Allah on your side

When all else fails and individuals feel very isolated, they seek some support to enable them to carry on making an effort. The awareness/remembrance that Allah (swt) is Omniscient and Omnipresent, gives patients support in a powerful form. Though human nature necessitates, individuals no longer feel the need to rely on the support and approval of other people. It is an experience any one believing in Allah (swt) can relate to. This is not to deny that people need each other nor claim that one can live successfully in isolation but reiterates that Allah is al Qadir (The Dominant).

Ayaat

Those (i.e. believers) to whom the people (hypocrites) said, ‘Verily, the people (pagans) have gathered against you (a great army) , therefore, fear them.’ But it (only) increased them in Faith, and they said: “Allah (Alone) is Sufficient for us, and He is the Best Disposer of affairs (for us). So, they returned with grace and bounty from Allah. No harm touched them; and they followed the good Pleasure of Allah. (Sr A’le Imran, 173-174)

Interpretation: Incidents related to the Battle of Hamra al-Asad where the idolaters, after defeating the Muslims on the battlefield wanted to re-attack them in al Madina. When the Prophet Muhammad (saw) heard of the news that the Companions (ra) were requested to join the fight and demonstrate their courage and commitment to defend themselves. They did this in the face of warnings that the enemy was greater than them but they remained steadfast in their trust in Allah (swt), Who returned them safely to their homes.

It was not becoming of the people of Al-Madinah and the